

fettered at her feet. Though the pace of the narrative, even here, is so deliberate as to recall those classical works where every line of text has a whole page of commentary—so deliberate that his Muse might be lame Nemesis herself (as, indeed, she often is)—yet the final impression only stamps itself the deeper. If he had written nothing else but diiose scenes, they would remain a new revelation in their art.

As with scenes, so with characters—amid much that is vague and episodic and prolix in this search for the vanished past, which seems itself at times to sprawl along like some prehistoric saurian, a few stand out far above the rest. Thus Charlus and Franfoise and Tante Leonie live; where Albertine and Odette may be said rather to wreck other people's lives than to convince us of their own. They are more acts of God than his creatures, calamities than characters. Even Swann, in this immense Morality, plays rather the part of Jealousy than of an individual that we can see all round. It is on the innate agony of human passion that is built this masterpiece of satire and elegy * in one; not on Charles Swann's individuality. It is Love lies bleeding. But when irony or suffering thus sharpen Proust's pencil, these figures he draws, whether generalised or not, rise up from his page and live. This is not least true when he seems almost parodying himself. Tante Leonie, for example, has little to do

with the story;
except that, like Swann with his jealousy, she
with her
valetudinarianism gives a foretaste of what
Marcel too
will one day become. But, though invalid old
ladies are
among the most familiar of satiric stock-
characters, how
new and how real she is; above all, in her
dialogues with
Eulalie! Thus, whenever Tante Leonie
laments her ap-
proaching end, Eulalie consolingly replies
that, with an
; like hers, she can easily live to a hundred:'
"J^e ne